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ABSTRACT

The Centre for International Cooperation and Services (CICS), part of the Open University of the United Kingdom, is described. Distance learning is defined and related to the Open University. Information is provided on the establishment, work, services, and resources of the CICS. A wallet folder at the back of the booklet contains details of the CICS Regular Studies Programme and an application form, a CICS staff list, and other current information. (SPG)

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES

The Open University
Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

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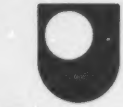

The Open University

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES

Centre pour les Etudes
et la Coopération Internationales

Centro de Cooperación y Asesoría
Internacional

مركز الدراسات والتعاون الدولي

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In the wallet folder at the back of this booklet you will also find:

1 Details of the CICS Regular Studies Programme and an application form;
2 A CICS staff list;
3 Other current information.

The information in this booklet, particularly with regard to course fees, is accurate at the time of going to press but CICS reserves the right to make such changes as are necessary in the light of changing circumstances.

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Introduction

During the 1960s the United Kingdom was one of many countries which faced a potential educational crisis arising out of a growing demand for post-secondary education linked with inadequate resources for its conventional provision.

Distance learning techniques, providing an alternative form of study based on multi-media methods outside formal educational systems, have emerged in many countries in response to this new demand.

Within the sector of post-secondary education the Open University of the United Kingdom is one of the most comprehensive distance learning systems. Many requests have been made to the University for information on distance education and for advice and assistance in establishing similar ventures elsewhere. In response to these developments the University has created a **Centre for International Cooperation and Services (CICS)** with the following main functions:

- to keep the University abreast of, and in contact with, developments in distance learning elsewhere in the world;
- to codify selected existing information in the field and to make this generally available;
- to carry out practical research and development studies;
- to provide for cooperation with, and assistance to, other institutions through courses, seminars, consultancy assignments, information exchanges and other activities.

CICS works closely with national governments and major national and international organizations.

This booklet is about CICS and its work.

I Distance Learning and the Open University

The context

The last fifteen years have been a time of rapid educational change, both in industrialized and in developing countries. Governments have been seeking to increase equality of educational opportunity and to make education more accessible, particularly to adults; and there has been a new emphasis on the concept of continuing education. The need to provide better professional, vocational and teacher education has been widely recognized; so too has the potential role of new educational technologies, particularly broadcasting.

This impetus towards development and reform has coincided in many cases with a shortage of resources and conflict over which educational methods to use in a given context. While the desirability of educational expansion is widely recognized, the particular means for achieving it are increasingly under scrutiny.

The last few years have seen an increasing number of educational authorities beginning to explore *distance learning* methods as a cost-effective means of promoting and diversifying educational expansion. In the United Kingdom the Open University was one such initiative, created to give a 'second chance' to adults who had left compulsory schooling at an early age, by using existing communications media within a learning system centred on the student.

What is distance learning?

In general, distance learning systems serve *relatively dispersed student populations* and involve a *minimal reliance* on, or a *significant change in the role* of, formal *'face-to-face' teaching*. Such systems may combine these characteristics with one or more of the features shown below:

Concerning students

- a degree of independence on the part of the learner as to the regularity, timing and location of study activities;
- an enlargement of educational opportunity by providing new target populations with access to education (for example, through part-time study facilities for working

adults, through relaxation or elimination of conventional academic entry requirements, or through in-service training courses).

Concerning learning materials and methods

- a flexibility in the content and curriculum of the learning materials (for example a modular structure, or a credit system);
- the provision of learning materials specifically designed for a self-instructional mode of study (including clearly formulated learning objectives, self-assessment devices and clear conceptual structuring) and containing features for the provision of feedback from students to learning system staff and vice versa;
- the bringing together of learners and skilled practitioners at the local level.

Concerning logistics and economics

- the centralised production of learning materials, such as printed texts, broadcasts, other audiovisual materials, Home Experiment Kits and so on;
- an optimal utilization of locally available resources (for example teachers, libraries, meeting rooms, 'animateurs', communication systems, business enterprises);
- a significantly lower recurrent unit cost per student than obtainable through conventional (classroom or equivalent) teaching arrangements and also potentially a considerably lower capital cost per student.

An important feature of distance learning systems is their *flexibility*. Such systems:

- can be used in any kind of country, industrialized, developing, rural or urbanized (the map on the centre pages shows a selection of the major institutions making significant use of distance learning methods);
- need not be restricted to the traditional content and structures of formal curricula. For example, they are being used innovatively in many countries to meet urgent needs such as primary and secondary level teacher education and the training of agricultural advisers and paramedical staff.

What is the Open University?

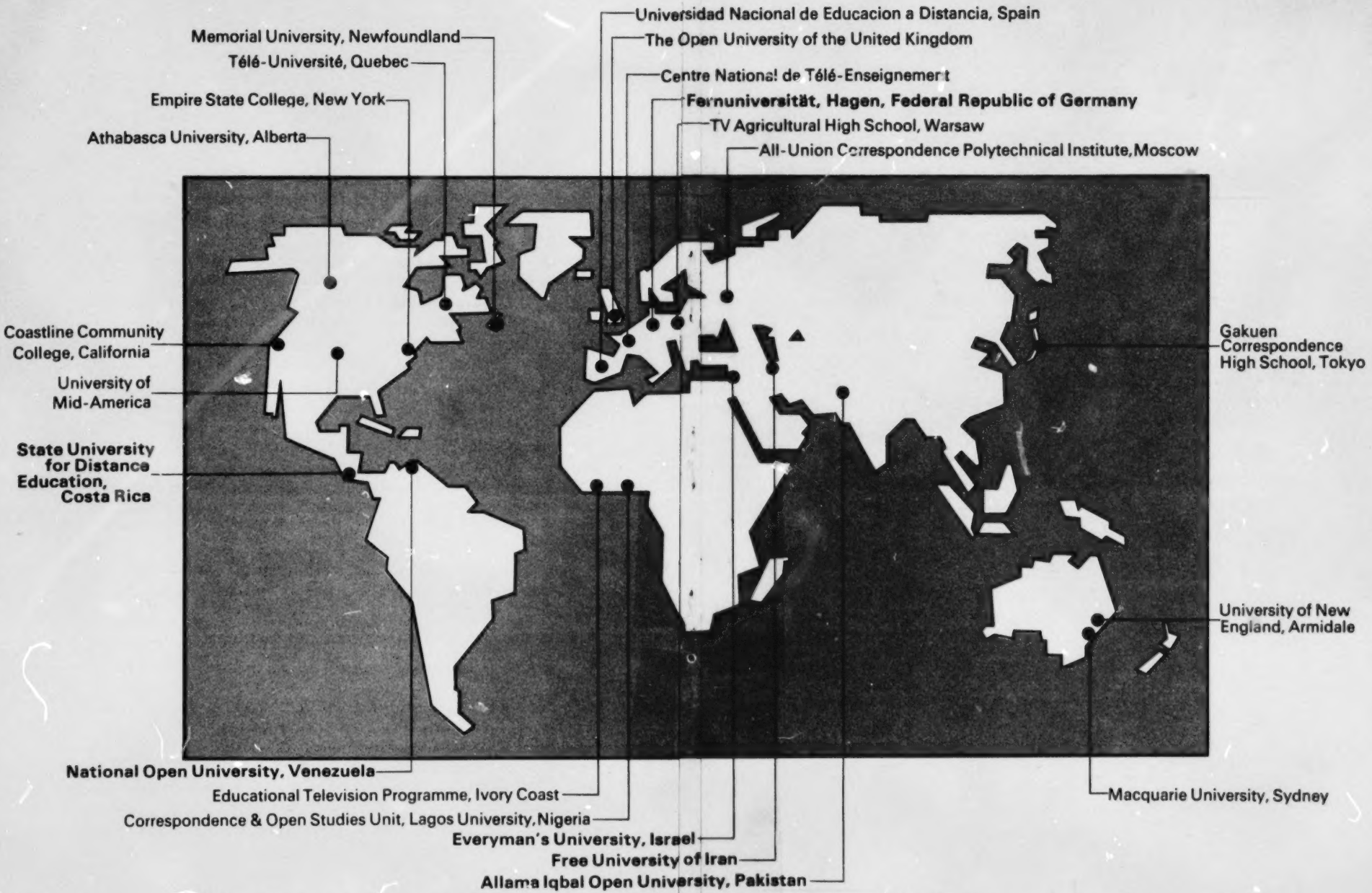
The creation of the Open University in 1969 was a major initiative by the British Government in response to the changing educational circumstances already outlined.

In terms of student numbers the Open University is now Britain's largest. Eight years after its inception it had more than 65,000 students. In the same period, over 21,000 people had graduated with the University's Bachelor degree. Currently it is offering over 140 degree level courses for students (equivalent to over 35 years of full-time student work), as well as a range of postgraduate studies. In addition, it has recently started to offer courses, some of a vocational nature, for adult students who do not wish to follow a full degree programme. With its partner, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the University employs nearly 2,700 full-time staff, assisted by 6,000 part-time tutors. It has 250 local centres throughout the United Kingdom and has so far published 2,000 correspondence texts. With the BBC it makes over 600 television and radio programmes annually and its broadcasts during the teaching year total some 60 hours weekly.

The Open University was by no means the first institution to use correspondence, radio and television for educational purposes. But it was the first to unite them in a major national distance learning system, combining in an autonomous university structure:

- a credit based, highly flexible course structure designed for part-time independent study;
- an open entry policy: no previous qualifications are required for admission (but, in general, only people of 21 years of age or over are eligible);
- a whole variety of distance teaching methods;
- a working partnership with a national broadcasting authority.

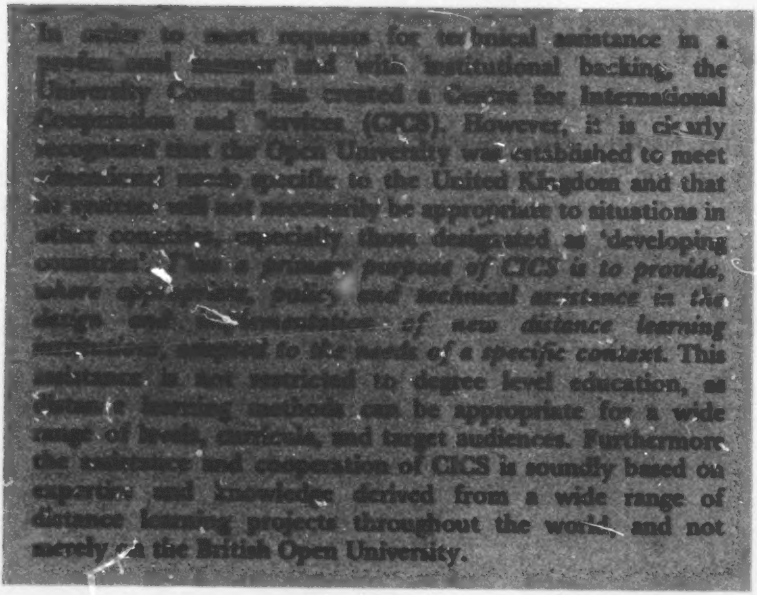
This combination of features within a single institution, and the success of the British Open University in providing study opportunities for a heterogeneous, dispersed adult population, have aroused world-wide interest. Signs of such interest are the large numbers of people who visit the OU campus (about 1,500 each year, predominantly from other countries), the many requests addressed to the University for assistance in designing and implementing other distance learning projects, and the increasing use of its teaching materials by other institutions.


Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia, Spain
Memorial University, Newfoundland
The Open University of the United Kingdom
Télé-Université, Quebec
Centre National de Télé-Enseignement
Empire State College, New York
Fernuniversität, Hagen, Federal Republic of Germany
TV Agricultural High School, Warsaw
Athabasca University, Alberta
All-Union Correspondence Polytechnical Institute, Moscow
Coastline Community College, California
Gakuen Correspondence High School, Tokyo
University of Mid-America
State University for Distance Education, Costa Rica
University of New England, Armidale
National Open University, Venezuela
Educational Television Programme, Ivory Coast
Macquarie University, Sydney
Correspondence & Open Studies Unit, Lagos University, Nigeria
Everyman's University, Israel
Free University of Iran
Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan

A selection of major institutions using distance learning methods (this selection only illustrates the world-wide distribution of distance learning institutions and is by no means intended to represent a complete list)

Centralised and localised
Use of own staff and use of existing institutions and groups
Centralised production and localised production
High technology and low technology
Centralised (e.g. broadcasting, post, newspapers, telephones)
Localised (e.g. local centres and groups, animateurs, mobile units)
Heterogeneous groups and individuals learning at a distance (different ages, urban/rural learners, varying motivation and backgrounds)

The components of a distance learning system


In order to meet requests for technical assistance in a
Council has created a Centre for International
Cooperation and Services (CICS). However, it is clearly
recognised that the Open University was established to meet
educational needs specific to the United Kingdom and that
its practices will not necessarily be appropriate to situations in
other countries, especially those designated as 'developing
countries'. Thus a primary purpose of CICS is to provide,
where appropriate, policy and technical assistance in the
design and implementation of new distance learning
systems, adapted to the needs of a specific context. This
assistance is not restricted to degree level education, as
distance learning methods can be appropriate for a wide
range of levels, curricula, and target audiences. Furthermore,
the existence and competence of CICS is soundly based on
expertise and knowledge derived from a wide range of
distance learning projects throughout the world, and not
merely on the British Open University.

The remainder of this booklet describes the nature of the services available through CICS and the resources at its disposal.

II The Centre for International Cooperation and Services

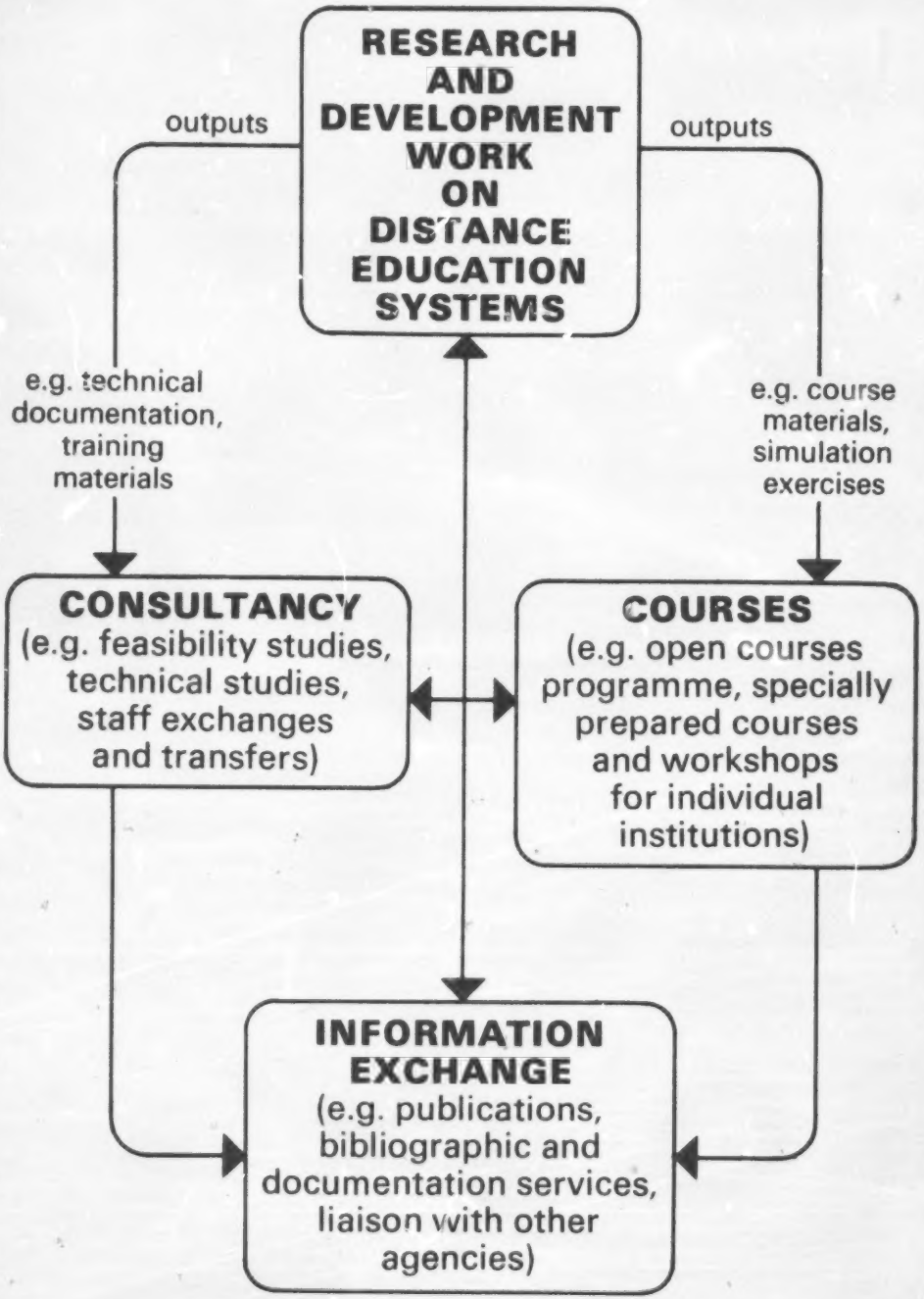
Why has CICS been established?

This decision was based on the success of the University's Consultancy Service, set up in 1974. In a two year period and with very limited resources the Service handled over 70 projects, involving nearly 100 Open University staff in overseas assignments in 14 different countries and in a variety of training and familiarization courses on the campus. It has been involved in a number of major projects such as those of the Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan, Everyman's University in Israel, the Fernuniversität in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Free University of Iran, the State University for Distance Education in Costa Rica and the National Open University in Venezuela (all marked in bold type on the map).

Other countries for which the Service was asked to carry out technical studies and training include Colombia, India, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. In addition the Consultancy Service participated in a number of projects at the request of, and funded by, UNESCO, the Inter-American Development Bank, the British Ministry of Overseas Development, the British Council and the Inter-University Council.

CICS has been established to respond more professionally to such demands and will have significantly larger resources at its disposal. It will not only continue the work of the Consultancy Service (which it has replaced) but also undertake new research, development and training functions, as well as liaise with distance learning institutions overseas.

The creation of CICS has been assisted financially by the British Ministry of Overseas Development but it remains completely independent of the Ministry. It is required by the University to become financially self-sufficient and will seek income in the form of fees and grants.


RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WORK ON DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEMS
outputs
outputs
e.g. technical documentation, training materials
e.g. course materials, simulation exercises
CONSULTANCY
(e.g. feasibility studies, technical studies, staff exchanges and transfers)
COURSES
(e.g. open courses programme, specially prepared courses and workshops for individual institutions)
INFORMATION EXCHANGE
(e.g. publications, bibliographic and documentation services, liaison with other agencies)

What can CICS offer?

The work of CICS falls into three main categories, illustrated diagrammatically opposite:

Consultancy advice: through the implementation of feasibility studies and other technical studies overseas, and by the identification and provision of suitable personnel for secondments and missions, both from the Open University and other institutions. Consultancies generally result in the preparation of a confidential report to the client or in the preparation of materials for his use.

Courses: courses and workshops on various aspects of distance education are provided by CICS. These are of two main kinds:

- a publicly advertised *regular studies programme,* for groups of up to 20 participants, held on the University's central campus at Milton Keynes (current details of this programme may be found in the wallet at the back of this booklet);
- *specially designed courses and workshops for specific* institutions and organizations, which can be provided at Milton Keynes, or overseas.

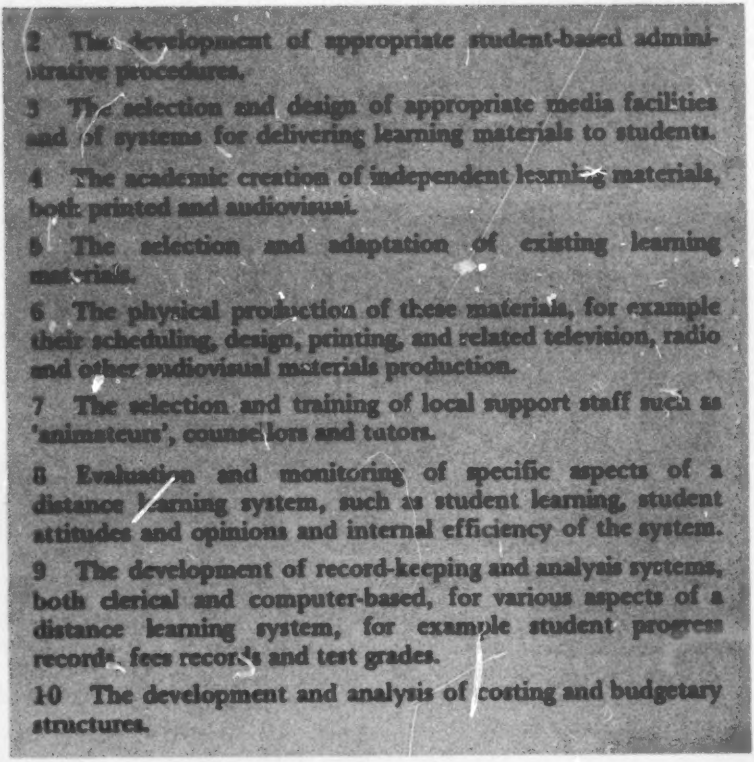
Familiarization visits to the University and occasional 'apprenticeships' within particular departments can also be organized.

Information Documentation and Exchange: CICS is developing an Information Resources Unit, i.e. a documentation and abstracting service on distance education providing a system of 'remote' technical assistance in response to specific enquiries and based on the creation and distribution of relevant printed and audiovisual materials. CICS will also publish a series of technical papers and reports of its own and develop links with other agencies and centres working in related areas.

The services offered by CICS are primarily concerned with the various aspects of planning and implementing distance education systems. Some of these aspects are listed below.

1 Planning and management skills required for the design and management of distance and open education systems for given contexts.

Opposite: the main activities of CICS


2 The development of appropriate student-based administrative procedures.
3 The selection and design of appropriate media facilities and of systems for delivering learning materials to students.
4 The academic creation of independent learning materials, both printed and audiovisual.
5 The selection and adaptation of existing learning materials.
6 The physical production of these materials, for example their scheduling, design, printing, and related television, radio and other audiovisual materials production.
7 The selection and training of local support staff such as 'animateurs', counsellors and tutors.
8 Evaluation and monitoring of specific aspects of a distance learning system, such as student learning, student attitudes and opinions and internal efficiency of the system.
9 The development of record-keeping and analysis systems, both clerical and computer-based, for various aspects of a distance learning system, for example student progress records, fees records and test grades.
10 The development and analysis of costing and budgetary structures.

On what are the services of CICS based?

The services of CICS are supported by a number of ongoing *research and development programmes* aimed at analysing and codifying experience drawn from a wide range of distance learning institutions and projects, and from other relevant areas of knowledge. These programmes are carried out by the full-time professional staff of CICS, in collaboration with Visiting Fellows from overseas institutions and other agencies.

An important aspect of this work is the investigation of appropriate technical assistance strategies for given contexts, and the evaluation and monitoring of any assistance provided by CICS in collaboration with client institutions. In this way it is hoped continually to modify and improve the quality of its services.

What resources does CICS have at its disposal?

Human resources

1 A group of twelve full-time professional staff:

- a *directorate* of three (Director, Deputy Director and Secretary);
- a number of full-time *programme* and part-time *associate* staff, seconded for periods of up to 24 months from other areas of the University;
- an *information officer*, responsible for managing the Information Resources Unit within CICS.

Details of current professional staff can be found in the wallet at the back of this booklet.

2 Supporting clerical and secretarial staff.

3 The academic, administrative and technical staff of the Open University as a whole, including those of BBC Open University Productions, available to CICS for specific projects (subject to priority being given to mainstream University work).

4 Staff from other institutions and organizations involved in distance education and related areas seconded as Visiting Fellows to undertake specific projects.

Physical resources

1 Office accommodation on the Open University campus at Milton Keynes.

2 The physical and technical back-up facilities of the University (e.g. audiovisual production and printing facilities, design studios, telecommunications and data processing facilities).

Information resources

1 The CICS Information Resources Unit is developing a representative collection of distance teaching materials (both printed and audiovisual) as well as technical documentation on distance education.

2 The University library also works closely with CICS and provides necessary specialist assistance.

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III How to get in touch with CICS

- **The full address of CICS is:**

  The Centre for International Cooperation and Services
  The Open University
  Walton Hall
  Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
  United Kingdom

  Telephone: Milton Keynes (0908) 74066
  Telex: 825061
  Cable: Sesame, UK

- For *general information* you should write to the Secretary of CICS at the above address.

- For information about possible *consultancy advice*, or assistance with *courses and workshops* you should also write to the Secretary of CICS.

- To find out more about the *regular studies programme* you should read the leaflet in the wallet at the back of this booklet.

- *To apply for participation in this programme* you should use the application form in the wallet. The form should be returned to the Secretary of CICS.

- To make enquiries concerning the *Information Resources Unit*, you should write to the Information Officer at CICS.

CICS is not responsible for the promotion and sale of Open University *teaching materials*. For further information about these you should write to:

Open University Educational Enterprises Limited
12 Cofferidge Close
Stony Stratford
Milton Keynes MK11 1BY

Telephone: Milton Keynes (0908) 566744
Telex: 826147